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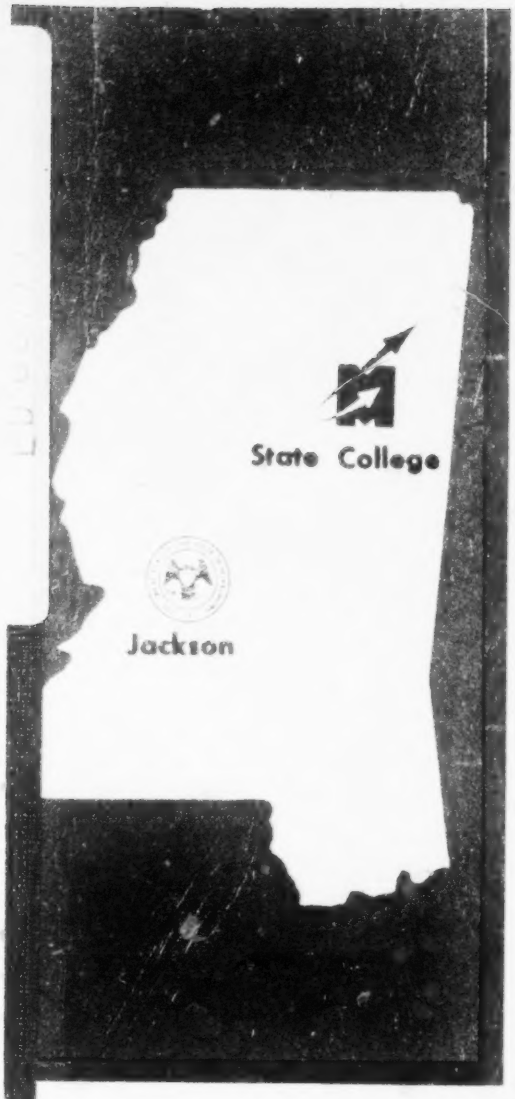
ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to: (1) compare perceptions of administrators, school board members, students, and vocational agriculture teachers concerning the vocational agriculture programs in Mississippi, (2) determine program strengths and weaknesses in order to improve present programs and plan future ones for Mississippi, and (3) provide feedback from students in the secondary grades concerning the program components. A 3-part questionnaire was developed, which dealt with policy, curriculum, and personnel abilities of the State vocational agriculture programs. Usable instruments in a random stratified sample that included six counties in Mississippi were returned from 11 principals, six school administrators, 28 school board members, 11 vocational agriculture teachers, and 101 of the students at the secondary level. Analysis of results indicated that local attitudes are important for implementing program objectives. The vocational agriculture curriculum was seen as adequate, though the agribusiness component was least sufficient of those rated. Suggestions for program improvement and generalizations which were inferred from the data concerning program attitudes are included. (AG)



Images and Perceptions of Vocational Agriculture Programs in Mississippi

Ralph Glenn Shoemake

Research Functions

- Stimulate
- Coordinate
- Implement
- Disseminate

Research Coordinating Unit
for Vocational & Technical Education

Mississippi State University
College of Education

In Cooperation With
Mississippi Department of Education
Division of Vocational & Technical Education

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IMAGES AND PERCEPTIONS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS IN MISSISSIPPI

by

Ralph Glenn Shoemake

Research Coordinating Unit for Vocational-Technical Education
College of Education
Mississippi State University

In cooperation with
Division of Vocational and Technical Education
Mississippi State Department of Education
Jackson, Mississippi

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PREFACE

The Research Coordinating Unit (RCU)at Mississippi State University supports various projects in its program of research in OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION AND MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT. Each of these projects is focused upon the derivation of information that will be useful in the development of human resources. Information derived thus far in this research program is included in the following publications:

1. Influential Factors Concerning Human Resources in Mississippi, by James E. Wall. Preliminary Report 11, Education Series 1.

2. Research in Home Economics Gainful Employment: Five Pilot Projects in Mississippi -- 1965-66, by Mildred R. Witt and James E. Wall. Preliminary Report 15, Education Series 3.

3. Employment Opportunities and Competency Needs in Nonfarm Agricultural Occupations in Mississippi, by James E. Wall, Obed L. Snowden, and A. G. Shepherd, Jr. Preliminary Report 16, Education Series 3.

4. Educational Aspirations, Expectations, and Abilities of Rural Male High School Seniors in Mississippi, by James F. Shill. Report 24, Education Series 4.

5. Careers of Rural Male High School Seniors in Mississippi: A Study of Occupational Intersts, Aspirations, and Expectations, by James F. Shill. Report 26, Education Series 5.

6. Self-Appraisal of Vocational-Technical Education in Mississippi by Local School Committees and Instructors, by Arthur R. Jones, Jr. Report 30, Education Series 6.

7. Occupational Education and Manpower Development: A Program and Bibliography, by James E. Wall and James F. Shill. Administrative Report 3, Education Series 7.

8. Educational and Occupational Profiles of Business Education Graduates of Mississippi State University: 1960-1968, by Shirley T. Alcantara. Report 32, Education Series 8.

9. Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Mississippi Choctaw Indians, by John H. Peterson, Jr. Report 34, Education Series 9.

10. Vocational Education Programs for Special Needs Students in Secondary Schools of Mississippi, by Allen Terry Steed. Report 37, Education Series 10.

11. Levels and Similarities of Instruction in Certain Content Areas of Vocational Education, by Jasper S. Lee. Report 8000, Research Series 1.

12. Images and Perceptions of Vocational Agriculture Programs in Mississippi, by Ralph Glenn Shoemake. Report 8002, Research Series 2.

The writer wishes to express his sincere appreciation to the school board members, superintendents, principals, vocational agriculture teachers, and the secondary school students of Mississippi, without whose help this study could not have been made.

R.G.S.

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IMAGES AND PERCEPTIONS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS IN MISSISSIPPI

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past, vocational education in agriculture has been viewed as a major part of the total educational program in Mississippi. Since Mississippi was a predominantly agricultural society, the program was directed totally toward farm youth and farmers. The scope of the program was evident by the large number of programs, with high enrollments in both in-school and adult classes. As late as 1965-66 the enrollment for vocational agriculture in Mississippi was 19,493 secondary students and 18,369 adults. During this same period there were 311 full-time teachers of vocational agriculture.[1]

As time passed, there was a steady decrease in the number of students and instructors for the vocational agriculture program in Mississippi. This is evident from the statistics for the school year 1970-71. During this period there were 11,646 secondary students and 10,416 adults. A total of 108 full-time teachers of vocational agriculture and 171 part-time teachers manned the programs within the State of Mississippi during this time.[2]

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[1]Mississippi State Board for Vocational Education, Twenty-Fifth Biennial Report on Vocational Education in Mississippi for Biennial Period Ending June 30, 1967. Bulletin No. 160, Vocational Series No.51. (Jackson, Mississippi: Miss. State Board for Vocational Education, June 1967), p.136.

[2]Division of Vocational and Technical Education, Mississippi State Department of Education, Annual Report of Program Activities, Mississippi State Board for Vocational Education, Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1971. (Jackson, Mississippi: State Department of Education, Oct. 1971),Statistical Part.

In 1963 Congress enacted the Vocational Education Act with the purpose, stated in part, "to maintain, extend, and improve existing programs of vocational education, and to develop new programs of vocational education."[3] This act allowed further flexibility by revising the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, thereby permitting students enrolled in the vocational agriculture programs to prepare for all occupations utilizing knowledge and skills in agriculture.[4] In 1968 Congress again stressed the need for change by passing the Amendments to the Vocational Education Act of 1963, which further increased the scope of offerings allowable under the act of 1963.

The reasons for the enrollment changes in vocational agriculture in Mississippi, such as those previously stated, may have many underlying factors, one of which may be the image of the entire agricultural education program. With this in mind, this study was undertaken to investigate the images and/or perceptions of those local persons dealing with vocational education in agriculture. Pertinent findings of such a study could be of considerable value in the development or in the redirection of existing program objectives.

The Problem and Objectives

The primary concern of this study was to compare perceptions of administrators (superintendents and principals), school board members, students, and vocational agriculture teachers concerning the vocational agriculture programs in Mississippi. It also was concerned with determining

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[3] Vocational Education Act of 1963, Sec. 1(A), 77 Stat. 403 (1963), Public Law 88-210, 88th Congress, December 1963.

[4] Ibid., Sec. 10.

overall strengths and weaknesses in the programs, the knowledge of which might prove helpful to persons involved in improving vocational agriculture programs. The major purpose of the study was to provide information relevant to improving and planning existing and future vocational agriculture programs in Mississippi. The study also was designed to provide feedback from secondary students (both those enrolled in vocational agriculture programs and those not enrolled in such programs) concerning strengths and weaknesses of curriculum components within the programs.

Specific objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the images and perceptions of administrators (superintendents and principals), school board members, secondary school students, and vocational agriculture teachers concerning vocational agriculture programs;

2. To determine selected groups' views of the adequacy of current vocational agriculture policy;

3. To provide information pertaining to the leadership abilities of vocational agriculture personnel;

4. To determine the views concerning the adequacy of the curriculum for vocational agriculture in today's agricultural industry;

5. To determine the views concerning the adequacy of students' training in agriculturally related occupations; and

6. To compare the differences in perceptions of school administrators, school board members, secondary school students, and vocational agriculture teachers concerning selected phases of the vocational agriculture program.

Research Methodology

Theoretical Frame of Reference

It was assumed that persons included in the study possessed sufficient knowledge concerning the vocational agriculture program to develop images and perceptions of the program. In addition, those persons were to rate selected phases of the program's effectiveness. It was also assumed that vocational agriculture programs were attempting to train and place individuals in agriculture and/or agri-related occupations. It was further assumed that the curriculum for vocational agriculture included materials correlated to those in The Teacher's Handbook for Vocational Agriculture in Mississippi.

Research Design and Method

The first phase of the study was the development of a questionnaire designed to gather data. This questionnaire consisted of: (1) A cover page to identify characteristics of each group included in the study (Appendix A); (2) Part I, which dealt with the vocational agriculture curriculum; (3) Part II, which dealt with current vocational agriculture policy; and (4) Part III, which dealt with leadership abilities of vocational agriculture personnel (Appendix B).

A random stratified sample of counties within the State of Mississippi was used for the study. In the sample, six counties in Mississippi, with vocational agriculture programs operating in one or more attendance centers were selected. Fourteen principals, eight chief school administrators, seventy school board members, fifteen vocational agriculture teachers, and one hundred fifty secondary school students were asked to respond to the questionnaire. Of those included in the sample, usable instruments

were returned from eleven (78.6 percent) of the principals, six (75 percent) of the chief school administrators, twenty-eight (40 percent) of the school board members, eleven (73.3 percent) of the vocational agriculture teachers, and one hundred one (67.3 percent) of the secondary students.

Analytical Design and Method

Information on completed questionnaires was transferred to International Business Machine (IBM) code sheets in order to summarize the data. Statistical procedures involved the computation of frequencies, percentage distributions, means, and ranks. Data collected from the questionnaires were used to present information concerning characteristics of administrators, school board members, vocational agriculture teachers, and secondary school students; and to present also information pertaining to vocational agriculture curriculum, policy, and leadership abilities of vocational agriculture personnel.

II. FINDINGS

This section of the report deals with specific findings obtained from data in completed questionnaires and is divided into four major divisions: Characteristic Information, Curricular Information, Information Pertaining to Policy, and Information Concerning Leadership Qualities of Vocational Agriculture Personnel.

Characteristic Information

The four groups included in the study were: administrators (superintendents and principals), school board members, vocational agriculture teachers, and secondary school students or, in other words, those persons charged with the task of administering the program, those conducting the program, and those applying the concepts taught. The following is a breakdown of the most notable characteristics of each group.

Characteristics of Administrators

The study revealed the following characteristics regarding the school administrators who responded: (1) approximately one-half were above 50 years of age; (2) approximately one-half reported 17 or more years of administrative experience; (3) 46 percent reported having nine or more years of experience as administrators for vocational agriculture programs; and (4) the administrators generally possessed a varied background of teaching experience, with the greatest concentration of experiences being in social studies (52.4 percent), mathematics (59 percent), and coaching (59.4 percent). The responses would seem to indicate that most administrators included in the study have seen the change from a farm-oriented program to a farm-and-business (agri-related)-oriented program.

Characteristics of School Board Members

From the responses received from school board members, the following characteristics are pointed out: (1) all school board members included in the study were serving on county school boards; (2) the greatest percentage of respondents were between 31 and 50 years of age; (3) 35.7 percent reported 5-8 years of experience as school board members; (4) 28.6 percent reported less than one year's experience; (5) one-half of the board members responding had not attended college; (6) 42.9 percent held baccalaureate or higher degrees; (7) almost 40 percent reported two years of vocational agriculture training in high school; and (8) slightly over 30 percent reported no vocational agriculture training in high school.

Characteristics of Vocational Agriculture Teachers

The responses from vocational agriculture teachers revealed the following: (1) 45.5 percent of the teachers were between 20 and 30 years of age; (2) 54.5 percent held master's degrees; (3) 54.6 percent reported 1-3 years of teaching experience; (4) 63.6 percent indicated three or more years of vocational agriculture training in high school; and (5) more than 80 percent of those persons included in the study served school systems with more than 1500 students.

Characteristics of Secondary School Students

The following characteristics of secondary school students were disclosed: (1) more than 74 percent reported one or more years of vocational agriculture training; (2) 29.8 percent reported vocational training other than vocational agriculture; (3) the greatest percentage (53.5 percent) of students expressed aspirations for completing college; (4) less than 10 percent expressed aspirations for completing trade school;

(5) a "C" average was the anticipated grade of 55.4 percent of the students upon completion of high school, while only 3 percent anticipated finishing with an "A" average; (6) the greatest percentage (69.3 percent) of students aspired to professional occupations; and (7) the highest percentage (46.5 percent) of students resided on farms, while 40.6 percent were rural nonfarm residents. It was interesting to note that the students indicated that 58.4 percent gained agricultural experience on a part-time or "hobby" farm, while only 5.9 percent of the students reported agri-business or agri-related experience.

Curricular Information

This division of the report includes information concerning certain phases of the vocational agriculture curriculum. Administrators, school board members, vocational agriculture teachers, and secondary school students were asked to rate each phase according to the following scale: 7-6 (outstanding), 5-4-3 (sufficient), 2-1 (insufficient). Questions were asked pertaining to: degree of adequacy concerning curriculum components; degree to include curriculum components; degree of effectiveness and proficiency produced by curriculum components; degree of adequacy of methods of instruction; degree of flexibility of goals and objectives for the vocational agriculture program; and the degree of participation of in-school groups and out-of-school groups in the vocational agriculture program. Ratings were used to rank the items according to means and also to compare the responses of the groups.

As reported in Table 1, all groups viewed the adequacy of curriculum components between sufficient and highly sufficient. It was generally agreed that the production agriculture component was the most adequate and

TABLE 1. -- Degree of Adequacy Concerning Curriculum Components as Viewed by Administrators, School Board Members, Vocational Agriculture Teachers, and Secondary School Students.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers		NonVo-Ag Students		Vo-Ag Students	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which production agriculture curriculum is adequate and up-to-date.	4.76	1	4.64	2	4.36	1	4.96	1	4.34	1
2. Degree to which agricultural mechanics curriculum is adequate and up-to-date.	4.17	2	4.73	1	3.82	3	4.73	2	3.97	4
3. Degree to which agribusiness curriculum is adequate and up-to-date.	3.44	4	3.89	4	3.55	4	4.48	4	3.98	3
4. Degree to which adult and young farmer curriculum is adequate and up-to-date.	4.06	3	4.55	3	3.91	2	4.53	3	4.01	2
Rating Scale:	Outstanding -- Sufficient -- Insufficient									
	7-6		5-4-3				2-1			

sufficient, while the consensus was that the agribusiness component was least sufficient of those rated. Thus, it may be assumed that increased emphasis should be placed upon the agribusiness component in many of the current vocational agriculture programs.

As shown in Table 2, all groups rated the degree of inclusion of curriculum components in instruction within the vocational agriculture program. A rating scale of 7-6 (high degree), 5-4-3 (medium degree),

TABLE 2. -- Degree to Which Curriculum Components Should Be Included in Instruction as Viewed by Administrators, School Board Members, Vocational Agriculture Teachers, and Secondary School Students.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers		NonVo-Ag Students		Vo-Ag Students	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which production agriculture should be included in vo-ag instruction.	4.94	3	5.18	2	5.36	3	4.80	3	4.67	1
2. Degree to which agricultural mechanics should be included in vo-ag instruction.	5.12	2	5.82	1	6.00	1	5.24	1	4.65	2
3. Degree to which agribusiness should be included in vo-ag instruction.	5.24	1	4.73	3	5.50	2	5.00	2	4.46	3

Rating Scale: High Degree (7-6) -- Medium Degree (5-4-3) -- Low Degree (2-1)

2-1 (low degree) was used to rate the items. All components were rated between medium and high degrees of adequacy by the groups. Vocational agriculture teachers viewed the agricultural mechanics component most important (a mean of 6.00), and so did school board members and nonvocational students, but to a lesser degree. School administrators' opinions were that the agribusiness component should receive top priority, while vocational agriculture students viewed production agriculture as the most important. It was noted that vocational agriculture students' ratings were generally somewhat lower than the other groups included in the study.

This may be because the students are involved more in the daily conduct of the program than the other groups, with the exception of the vocational agriculture teachers.

Table 3 indicates the responses of all groups included in the study with regard to the effectiveness and proficiency produced by selected curriculum components of the vocational agriculture program. The ratings ranged from sufficient to outstanding.

TABLE 3. -- Degree of Effectiveness and Proficiency Produced by Curriculum Components as Viewed by Administrators, School Board Members, Vocational Agriculture Teachers, and Secondary School Students.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers		NonVo-Ag Students		Vo-Ag Students	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which FFA organization increases effectiveness of curriculum.	5.29	1	5.55	1	5.18	1	5.32	1	5.08	1
2. Degree of student proficiency produced by production agriculture instruction.	4.17	2	4.11	3	4.82	3	4.95	2	4.25	4
3. Degree of student proficiency produced by agricultural mechanics instruction.	4.17	2	4.64	2	4.91	2	4.53	3	4.94	2
4. Degree of student proficiency produced by agribusiness instruction.	4.12	4	3.91	4	4.00	4	4.17	4	4.34	3
Rating Scale:	Outstanding -- Sufficient -- Insufficient									
	7-6				5-4-3				2-1	

It was agreed by all groups that the Future Farmers of America organization increased the effectiveness of the curriculum to a higher degree than did other phases of the program.

It was generally agreed that students received less proficiency in the agribusiness component than from other components in the curriculum. Increased involvement of students will be necessary before relevant images and impressions of the agribusiness component can be formed by others.

Table 4 depicts the responses of the groups toward the adequacy

TABLE 4. -- Degree of Adequacy Concerning Methods of Instruction in Curriculum Components as Viewed by Administrators, School Board Members, Vocational Agriculture Teachers, and Secondary School Students.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers		NonVo-Ag Students		Vo-Ag Students	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which method of instruction for production agriculture is adequate and up-to-date.	4.76	1	4.91	1	5.18	1	4.88	1	4.60	1
2. Degree to which method of instruction for agricultural mechanics is adequate and up-to-date.	4.47	2	4.73	2	4.36	2	4.53	3	4.41	2
3. Degree to which method of instruction for agribusiness is adequate and up-to-date.	4.24	3	4.45	3	4.09	4	4.72	2	4.10	4
4. Degree to which methods of instruction for adult and young farmer groups are adequate and up-to date.	4.17	4	3.82	4	4.18	3	4.38	4	4.32	3

Rating Scale: Outstanding -- Sufficient -- Insufficient
7-6 5-4-3 2-1

of methods of instruction in selected components of the program. It was agreed among all groups that the method of instruction for the production agriculture component was the most adequate and up-to-date. Ratings ranged from highly sufficient to outstanding on this item. Perceptions varied among groups as to the least adequate. Ratings for the adequacy of both agribusiness and the young and adult farmer methods of instruction seemed to be somewhat lower than other methods, although they still were rated sufficient and highly sufficient.

In rating the flexibility of goals and objectives for the vocational agriculture program, all groups viewed the measure as being between highly sufficient and outstanding, as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5. -- Degree of Flexibility Concerning Goals and Objectives of Vocational Agriculture as Viewed by Administrators, School Board Members, Vocational Agriculture Teachers, and Secondary School Students.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers		NonVo-Ag Students		Vo-Ag Students	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which vo-ag goals and objectives are flexible enough to meet current and future needs.	4.59	5	5.00	3	5.09	2	4.96	4	5.17	1

Rating Scale: Outstanding -- Sufficient -- Insufficient
7-6 5-4-3 2-1

Ratings in numerical order were as follows: vocational agriculture students (a mean of 5.17), vocational agriculture teachers (a mean of 5.09), school board members (a mean of 5.00), nonvocational students (a mean of 4.96), and school administrators (a mean of 4.59).

The degree of participation for out-of-school and in-school groups in the vocational agriculture program was measured in two areas as shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6. -- Degree of Participation Concerning Out-of-School Groups and In-School Groups as Viewed by Administrators, School Board Members, Vocational Agriculture Teachers, and Secondary School Students.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers		NonVo-Ag Students		Vo-Ag Students	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree of participation of adult and young farmers in vo-ag instruction.	3.59	2	3.91	2	4.40	2	4.44	1	4.22	2
2. Degree of participation of students in FFA organization.	5.24	1	5.64	1	5.27	1	4.44	1	4.91	1
Rating Scale:	Outstanding -- Sufficient -- Insufficient									
	7-6				5-4-3				2-1	

All groups indicated that students' participation in the Future Farmers of America organization was better than the participation of adult and young farmers in vocational agriculture instruction.

It was noted that nonvocational agriculture students consistently rated each phase concerning the curriculum higher than did vocational agriculture students. This may be due to several factors, but the primary cause could be insufficient knowledge concerning the operation of vocational agriculture programs.

Information Pertaining to Policy

This division of the report presents information relevant to selected items of current policy for vocational agriculture programs in Mississippi. The views of the three groups'(administrators, school board members, and vocational agriculture teachers) knowledge about vocational agriculture policy were sought. These groups were asked to respond to the following rating scale: 7-6 (outstanding), 5-4-3 (sufficient), 2-1 (insufficient). Responses of each group were used to rank items according to means and to compare each group's overall views or opinions. Each group was asked questions pertaining to areas such as State-level policy, policy for the vocational agriculture program, administrative policy for vocational agriculture, communication concerning policy for vocational agriculture, and policy concerning the Future Farmers of American organization.

As shown in Table 7, opinions concerning State-level policy were

TABLE 7. -- Opinions of Administrators, School Board Members, and Vocational Agriculture Teachers Concerning State-Level Vocational Agriculture Policy.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which policy for state supervisors' duties and responsibilities are understood.	3.35	2	4.27	1	4.73	1
2. Degree to which policy for state-department-called meetings is adequate.	4.00	1	3.73	2	4.55	2
Rating Scale:	Outstanding -- Sufficient -- Insufficient					
	7-6	5-4-3		2-1		

varied, although all ratings were sufficient or above. Vocational agriculture teachers rated the understanding of State supervisors' duties and responsibilities highest (a mean of 4.73), while administrators rated the same item lowest (a mean of 3.35). A possible explanation may be that a communication gap exists between echelons involved with the vocational agriculture policy.

As indicated in Table 8, vocational agriculture teachers generally

TABLE 8. Adequacy of Policies Pertaining to Agriculture Programs as Viewed by Administrators, School Board Members and Vo-Ag Teachers

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which policy for vo-ag budgeting is adequate.	3.71	3	4.18	1	4.27	2
2. Degree to which policy for student selection for vo-ag is adequate.	3.59	4	3.73	5	4.00	5
3. Degree to which policy for class scheduling for vo-ag is adequate.	4.35	1	4.09	2	4.27	2
4. Degree to which policy for vo-ag teacher load computation is justifiable.	3.59	4	3.90	3	4.45	1
5. Degree to which policy for local advisory committee is adequate.	3.82	2	3.90	3	4.27	2
Rating Scale:	Outstanding -- Sufficient -- Insufficient					
	7-6		5-4-3		2-1	

rated items concerning policy for the vocational agriculture program higher than did other groups. Both administrators and vocational agriculture teachers viewed the policy for class scheduling as highly sufficient, with the highest mean being 4.35 by administrators. Other policy areas of the vocational agriculture program such as budgeting,

teacher load computation, local advisory committee, and student selection were rated sufficient or highly sufficient by all groups.

Table 9 indicates the opinions of administrators, school board members, and vocational agriculture teachers toward administrative policy related to the vocational agriculture program. Opinions varied

TABLE 9. -- Opinions of Administrators, School Board Members, and Vocational Agriculture Teachers Concerning Administrative Policy Related to Vocational Agriculture Teachers.

Item	Admin. Mean	Admin. Rank	Sch.Bd. Members Mean	Sch.Bd. Members Rank	Vo-Ag Teachers Mean	Vo-Ag Teachers Rank
1. Degree to which policy for releasing vo-ag teacher from school at 1:00 p.m. is justifiable.	3.24	5	4.36	4	6.09	1
2. Degree to which policy pertaining to vo-ag teacher's living facility is justifiable.	5.18	1	4.91	1	5.00	2
3. Degree to which local travel policy is adequate.	4.12	2	4.36	4	4.45	5
4. Degree to which policy for compensation of vo-ag teachers is adequate.	3.59	4	4.82	2	4.64	3
5. Degree to which present vo-ag records and reports are adequate and useable.	3.82	3	4.60	3	4.64	3
Rating Scale:	Outstanding 7-6		Sufficient 5-4-3		Insufficient 2-1	

among groups questioned. Administrators rated the policy for releasing the vocational agriculture teacher at 1:00 p.m. lowest (a mean of 3.24), lowly sufficient. Conversely, vocational agriculture teachers' rating of this item was a mean of 6.09 (outstanding). One item on which all members agreed as being highly sufficient or outstanding was the

justification of the policy for the vocational agriculture teacher's living facility. Other policy items, such as local travel, teacher compensation, and usefulness of current vocational agriculture records and reports, were rated between sufficient and highly sufficient by all groups included in the study.

Opinions were varied toward communication among groups concerning vocational agriculture policy. All items were rated sufficient, as shown in Table 10, by all groups. Opinions were that administrators

TABLE 10. -- Degree of Communication Among Groups Concerning Vocational Agriculture Policy as Viewed by Administrators, School Board Members, and Vocational Agriculture Teachers.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which school system personnel are familiar with policies for vo-ag.	3.35	4	4.18	2	3.73	4
2. Degree to which school administrators are familiar with policies for vo-ag.	4.47	1	4.82	1	4.62	2
3. Degree to which policy for vocational facilities by persons or groups other than students is adequate.	4.00	3	4.00	4	4.73	1
4. Degree to which vo-ag policy is publicized and explained to vo-ag teachers, school administrators, and school board members.	4.18	2	4.10	3	4.00	3

Rating Scale:	Outstanding	Sufficient	Insufficient
	7-6	5-4-3	2-1

were more familiar with vocational agriculture policy than were the other groups.

As shown in Table 11, ratings of the policy for operation of the Future Farmers of America organization were between highly sufficient and outstanding. All groups agreed that district and state FFA activities were justifiable, and, to a lesser degree, that policy for operation of the FFA program was adequate.

TABLE 11. -- Opinions of Administrators, School Board Members, and Vocational Agriculture Teachers on Policy Concerning the Future Farmers of America.

Item	Admin. Mean	Admin. Rank	Sch.Bd. Members Mean	Sch.Bd. Members Rank	Vo-Ag Teachers Mean	Vo-Ag Teachers Rank
1. Degree to which district and state Future Farmer activities are justifiable.	4.53	1	4.64	1	5.73	1
2. Degree to which policy for operation of the FFA program is adequate.	4.35	2	4.36	2	4.91	2
Rating Scale:	Outstanding 7-6	-- Sufficient 5-4-3	-- Insufficient 2-1			

Information Concerning Leadership Qualities of Vocational Agriculture Personnel

Five areas of leadership characteristics were examined and will be presented in this division. These areas include: (1) personal leadership traits of vocational agriculture teachers, (2) vocational agriculture teachers as change agents, (3) involvement of vocational agriculture teachers in school activities, and (5) professional relationship of vocational agriculture teachers with students. Again, three groups (administrators, school board members, and vocational agriculture teachers) were asked to rate items according to the following scale: 7-6 (outstanding), 5-4-3 (sufficient), and 2-1 (insufficient).

As shown in Table 12, certain personal leadership characteristics of vocational agriculture teachers were examined. It was the consensus that of those traits examined, the teacher is most dependable in carrying out responsibilities. Other traits such as ability to work with other

TABLE 12. -- Opinions of Administrators, School Board Members, and Vocational Agriculture Teachers Concerning Personal Leadership Traits of Vocational Agriculture Teachers.

Item	Admin. Mean	Admin. Rank	Sch.Bd. Members Mean	Sch.Bd. Members Rank	Vo-Ag Teachers Mean	Vo-Ag Teachers Rank
1. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to work with other professional personnel as a team.	5.47	2	5.55	4	5.91	2
2. Degree of self-confidence of a vo-ag teacher.	5.31	5	5.60	3	5.91	2
3. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher exhibits knowledge of agricultural information.	4.94	6	5.45	6	5.36	5
4. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is dependable in carrying out responsibilities.	5.59	1	5.73	2	6.09	1
5. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is adequately trained.	5.35	3	5.55	4	5.00	6
6. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to communicate with students, adults, and professional personnel.	5.35	3	5.82	1	5.82	4
Rating Scale:	Outstanding -- Sufficient -- Insufficient 7-6 5-4-3 2-1					

professional personnel, self-confidence, knowledge of agricultural information, adequacy of training, and ability to communicate with others were examined and ratings of these items were between highly sufficient and outstanding.

The groups' rating of teachers as change agents were between highly sufficient and outstanding. Items such as the vocational agriculture teacher's ability to meet the demands of current situations; to accomplish worthwhile goals; to recognize outmoded concepts and educational practices; to deal with a problem and reach a logical conclusion; and to bring about needed changes and additions to the program were examined as shown in Table 13.

TABLE 13. -- Opinions of Administrators, School Board Members, and Vocational Agriculture Teachers Concerning Vocational Agriculture Teachers as Change Agents.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to accomplish worthwhile goals.	4.69	5	4.64	5	5.18	5
2. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to recognize outmoded concepts and educational practices.	5.18	2	5.45	4	5.82	1
3. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher persists in bringing about needed changes and additions in the program.	5.18	2	5.55	2	5.45	3
4. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to deal with a problem and reach a logical conclusion.	5.06	4	5.55	2	5.36	4
5. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to meet demands of current situations.	5.19	1	5.64	1	5.73	2
Rating Scale:	Outstanding -- Sufficient -- Insufficient					
	7-6	5-4-3		2-1		

Opinions varied concerning the vocational agricultural teacher's involvement in the community affairs, participation in organizations, acceptance

of the teacher as part of the community, and the respect of the leadership ability of the teacher by adults, as shown in Table 14. The ratings were between highly sufficient and outstanding.

TABLE 14. -- Opinions of Administrators, School Board Members, and Vocational Agriculture Teachers Concerning the Involvement of Vocational Agriculture Teachers in the Community.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher has taken part in community affairs.	4.82	4	4.73	4	5.55	4
2. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher participates in civic, religious, and professional organizations.	5.29	3	5.73	1	6.00	2
3. Degree of acceptance of a vo-ag teacher as part of the community.	5.47	1	4.91	3	5.73	3
4. Degree to which adults in the community respect the leadership ability of a vo-ag teacher.	5.35	2	5.55	2	6.09	1

Rating Scale: Outstanding 7-6 -- Sufficient 5-4-3 -- Insufficient 2-1

As indicated in Table 15, administrators, school board members,

TABLE 15. -- Opinions of Administrators, School Board Members, and Vocational Agriculture Teachers Concerning the Involvement of Vocational Agriculture Teachers in School Activities.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher takes part in school activities.	5.24	2	5.73	1	6.09	1
2. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is an effective representative of the entire school.	5.35	1	5.36	2	5.91	2

Rating Scale: Outstanding 7-6 -- Sufficient 5-4-3 -- Insufficient 2-1

and vocational agriculture teachers were asked to rate the vocational agriculture teacher as a part of the school and as an effective representative of the school system. All groups rated the teachers as highly sufficient to outstanding in meeting these criteria.

Table 16 shows the overall ratings of the three groups toward the

TABLE 16. -- Opinions of Administrators, School Board Members, and Vocational Agriculture Teachers Concerning the Professional Relationship of Vocational Agriculture Teachers with Students.

Item	Admin.		Sch.Bd. Members		Vo-Ag Teachers	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is concerned for each student's proficiency.	5.18	2	5.18	2	5.64	2
2. Degree to which secondary students respect the leadership ability of a vo-ag teacher.	5.35	1	5.55	1	6.09	1
Rating Scale:	Outstanding -- Sufficient -- Insufficient					
	7-6	5-4-3		2-1		

professional relationship of the vocational agriculture teacher with students. It was agreed by all groups that the secondary student's respect of the leadership ability of the teacher was between highly sufficient and outstanding, as was the teacher's concern for each student's proficiency, but to a lesser degree.

It must be remembered that in appraising the leadership abilities of vocational agriculture teachers, only groups involved with the school system were used. A total analogy of the teacher was not made. It was noted in almost all instances that the teacher's ratings of his leadership abilities were higher than either the school board members or the administrators.

III. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This report presents the perceptions and images of administrators, school board members, vocational agriculture teachers, and secondary school students, toward selected phases of the vocational agriculture program in Mississippi. It represents those persons assigned the tasks of administering, conducting, and actually applying the concepts taught in the vocational agriculture program.

From the data collected in the study the following generalizations were drawn:

1. Administrators' perceptions of the vocational agriculture program were lower than other groups included in the study.
2. School board members' perceptions of the vocational agriculture program were generally higher than that of administrators, but were generally lower than the perceptions of vocational agriculture teachers.
3. Secondary school students' perceptions of the curricular phase of the vocational agriculture program were considered adequate.
4. Vocational agriculture students generally viewed the curriculum as being adequate to a lesser extent than did other groups.
5. Nonvocational agriculture students generally perceived the program as being more adequate than did vocational agriculture students.
6. Vocational agriculture teachers' images of the program were higher than those of other groups in the study.
7. Administrators, school board members, and vocational agriculture teachers viewed the policy for vocational agriculture as being sufficient.
8. Each group perceived current policy for vocational agriculture as adequate; however, there were indications that a lack of

communication and clarity toward certain policy items existed among echelons who administer the program.

9. All phases of the vocational agriculture curriculum were viewed as being adequate, but at different degrees.

10. The agribusiness curriculum component was perceived as the least adequate which is probably due to the fact that only a small percentage of the students were receiving experiences in agribusiness.

11. The production agriculture curriculum component was viewed as the most adequate and up-to-date.

It was found that groups viewed the vocational agriculture program as sufficient in those areas appraised. The data disclosed that there were certain areas of the vocational agriculture program that need enhancement. Some of these are as follows:

1. Free flowing ideas and communication of groups charged with the task of administering the vocational agriculture program should be a primary concern.

2. A current policy guide should be developed and distributed to all persons involved with the vocational agriculture program.

3. Increased emphasis should be placed upon the agribusiness curriculum component in most vocational agriculture programs.

4. Overall aims, objectives, and procedures of the program should be publicized throughout the state.

5. The future needs of students in Mississippi schools should be assessed and considered for future changes or reemphasis for the program.

6. All future program planning should include all persons involved with the program, whether administrator, teacher, or school board member.

7. Future Farmer of America objectives should be evaluated as to meeting the needs of the students served.

8. State and local personnel should work more closely in establishing and attaining program objectives.

It is evident from this study that there are certain aspects of the vocational agriculture program that need to be given priority in the future. This study indicates that local attitudes and opinions can be of utmost importance for future development and implementation of redirected or new vocational agriculture program objectives.

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V. APPENDICES

Appendix A

FORM # 1

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' VIEWS OF THE VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAM IN MISSISSIPPI

The first section of this questionnaire pertains to general characteristics of school administrators. All information will be confidential and individual administrators and schools will NOT be identified in the research.

SECTION A: School Administrators' Characteristics

Check appropriate response for each question.

1. Present position:
   ( ) 1. County superintendent
   ( ) 2. Superintendent
   ( ) 3. Principal
   ( ) 4. Other (specify) _____

2. Age group:
   ( ) 1. 20-30 yrs. of age
   ( ) 2. 31-40 yrs. of age
   ( ) 3. 41-50 yrs. of age
   ( ) 4. 51 yrs. of age or more

3. Experience as school administrator:
   ( ) 1. 1-4 yrs.
   ( ) 2. 5-8 yrs.
   ( ) 3. 9-12 yrs.
   ( ) 4. 13-16 yrs.
   ( ) 5. 17 yrs. or more

4. Experience as administrator of vo-ag program:
   ( ) 1. 1-4 yrs.
   ( ) 2. 5-8 yrs.
   ( ) 3. 9-12 yrs.
   ( ) 4. 13-16 yrs.
   ( ) 5. 17 yrs. or more

5. Previous teaching area:
   ( ) 1. English
   ( ) 2. Social Studies
   ( ) 3. Mathematics
   ( ) 4. Science
   ( ) 5. Guidance
   ( ) 6. Vo-ag
   ( ) 7. Coach
   ( ) 8. Trades & Industrial or Ind. Arts
   ( ) 9. Other (specify)_____

6. Years of vo-ag while in high school:
   ( ) 1. None
   ( ) 2. One year
   ( ) 3. Two years
   ( ) 4. Three years or more

7. Size of school system:
   ( ) 1. County unit or separate school district under 1500 pupils
   ( ) 2. County unit or separate school district 1501 or more

8. Size of attendance center (if applicable):
   ( ) 1. Under 600 pupils
   ( ) 2. 601-900 pupils
   ( ) 3. 901 or more pupils

FORM #2

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS' VIEWS
OF THE VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAM
IN MISSISSIPPI

The first section of this questionnaire pertains to general characteristics of school board members. All information will be confidential and individual schools or school board members will NOT be identified in the research.

SECTION A: School Board Members' Characteristics

Check appropriate response for each question.

1. Type board presently serving on:
   ( ) 1. Local
   ( ) 2. County
   ( ) 3. Separate school district

2. Age group:
   ( ) 1. 20-30 yrs. of age
   ( ) 2. 31-40 yrs. of age
   ( ) 3. 41-50 yrs. of age
   ( ) 4. 51 yrs. of age or more

3. Experience as school board member:
   ( ) 1. Less than 1 year
   ( ) 2. 1-4 years
   ( ) 3. 5-8 years
   ( ) 4. 9-12 years
   ( ) 5. 13 years or more

4. Educational level:
   ( ) 1. 8 grades or less
   ( ) 2. 9th-11th grade
   ( ) 3. Completed high school
   ( ) 4. Junior college
   ( ) 5. B.S. degree
   ( ) 6. M.S. degree
   ( ) 7. Other (specify)

5. Years of vo-ag while in high school:
   ( ) 1. None
   ( ) 2. One year
   ( ) 3. Two years
   ( ) 4. 3 years or more

6. Size of school system:
   ( ) 1. County unit or separate school district under 1500 pupils
   ( ) 2. County unit or separate school district 1501 pupils or over

7. Size of attendance center (if applicable):
   ( ) 1. under 600 pupils
   ( ) 2. 601-900 pupils
   ( ) 3. 901 or more pupils

FORM #3

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS' VIEWS OF THE VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAM IN MISSISSIPPI

The first section of this questionnaire pertains to general characteristics of vocational agriculture teachers. All information will be confidential and individual teachers or schools will NOT be identified in the research.

SECTION A: Vocational Agriculture Teachers' Characteristics

Check appropriate response for each question.

1. Age group:
   ( ) 1. 20-30 years of age
   ( ) 2. 31-40 years of age
   ( ) 3. 41-50 years of age
   ( ) 4. Above 50 years of age

2. Educational level:
   ( ) 1. B.S. degree
   ( ) 2. Master's degree
   ( ) 3. Other (specify)_____

3. Years' experience teaching vocational agriculture:
   ( ) 1. Less than 1 year
   ( ) 2. 1-3 years
   ( ) 3. 4-7 years
   ( ) 4. 8-12 years
   ( ) 5. 13-16 years
   ( ) 6. 17 or more years

4. Years of vo-ag while in high school:
   ( ) 1. None
   ( ) 2. One year
   ( ) 3. Two years
   ( ) 4. Three years

5. Size of school system:
   ( ) 1. County or separate school district under 1500 pupils
   ( ) 2. County or separate school district 1501 or more

6. Size of attendance center (if applicable):
   ( ) 1. Attendance center under 600 pupils
   ( ) 2. Attendance center 601-900 pupils
   ( ) 3. Attendance center 901 or more pupils

FORM #4

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE
VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAM
IN MISSISSIPPI

The first section of this questionnaire pertains to general characteristics of high school students. All information will be confidential and individual teachers, schools, or students will NOT be identified in the research.

SECTION A: High School Student Characteristics

1. Number of years of vocational agriculture while in high school:
   ( ) 1. None
   ( ) 2. 1 year
   ( ) 3. 2 years
   ( ) 4. 3 years or more

2. Other vocational training while in high school:
   ( ) 1. Industrial Arts
   ( ) 2. Trade and Industrial Education
   ( ) 3. Other (specify)_____

3. Educational desires:
   ( ) 1. Complete high school
   ( ) 2. Complete junior college
   ( ) 3. Complete business school
   ( ) 4. Complete college
   ( ) 5. Complete trade school
   ( ) 6. Apprenticeship
   ( ) 7. Other (specify)_____

4. Approximate grade average when completing high school:
   ( ) 1. A
   ( ) 2. B
   ( ) 3. C
   ( ) 4. D

5. Present residence:
   ( ) 1. Farm
   ( ) 2. Rural nonfarm
   ( ) 3. Urban-town

6. Agricultural experience:
   ( ) 1. Full-time farm
   ( ) 2. Part-time farm
   ( ) 3. Agri-Business
   ( ) 4. Other (specify)_____

7. Desired occupation:
   1. Specify:_____

Appendix B

SECTION B: Ratings of Selected Characteristics of Vo-Ag Programs

Each item in the following form should be rated by placing an "X" in one of the seven columns which indicates your response. On the scale 7 is the highest rating, 4 is average rating, and 1 denotes the lowest rating.

RATING SCALE (check rating of each item)

	Outstanding		Sufficient			Insufficient	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
PART I: Vocational Agriculture Curriculum							
1. Degree to which production agriculture curriculum is adequate and up-to-date.							
2. Degree to which agricultural mechanics curriculum is adequate and up-to-date.							
3. Degree to which agri-business curriculum is adequate and up-to-date.							
4. Degree to which adult and young farmer curriculum is adequate and up-to-date.							
5. Degree to which FFA organization increases effectiveness of curriculum.							
6. Degree to which method of instruction for production agriculture is adequate and up-to-date.							
7. Degree to which method of instruction for agricultural mechanics is adequate and up-to-date.							
8. Degree to which method of instruction for agri-business is adequate and up-to-date.							
9. Degree to which methods of instruction for adult and young farmer groups are adequate and up-to-date.							

SECTION B (Continued)

	Outstanding		Sufficient			Insufficient	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
10. Degree of student proficiency produced by production agriculture instruction.							
11. Degree of student proficiency produced by agricultural mechanics instruction.							
12. Degree of student proficiency produced by agri-business instruction.							
13. Degree of participation of adult and young farmers in vo-ag instruction.							
14. Degree of participation of students in FFA organization.							
15. Degree to which production agriculture should be included in vo-ag instruction.							
16. Degree to which agricultural mechanics should be included in vo-ag instruction.							
17. Degree to which agri-business should be included in vo-ag instruction.							
18. Degree to which vo-ag goals and objectives are flexible enough to meet current and future needs.							
PART II: Vocational Agriculture Policy 19. Degree to which vo-ag policy is publicized and explained to vo-ag teachers, school administrators, and school board members.							
20. Degree to which policy for releasing vo-ag teacher from school at 1 p.m. is justifiable.							

SECTION B (Continued)

	Outstanding		Sufficient			Insufficient	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
21. Degree to which district and state Future Farmer activities are justifiable.							
22. Degree to which policy pertaining to vo-ag teacher's living facility is justifiable.							
23. Degree to which policy for State Supervisors' duties and responsibilities are understood.							
24. Degree to which policy for vo-ag budgeting is adequate.							
25. Degree to which school system personnel are familiar with policy for vo-ag.							
26. Degree to which school administrators are familiar with policy for vo-ag.							
27. Degree to which present vo-ag records and reports are useable and adequate.							
28. Degree to which policy for use of vocational facilities by persons or groups other than students is adequate.							
29. Degree to which policy for local advisory committee is adequate.							
30. Degree to which local travel policy is adequate.							
31. Degree to which policy for State Department called meetings is adequate.							

SECTION B (Continued)

	Outstanding		Sufficient			Insufficient	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
32. Degree to which policy for student selection for vo-ag is adequate.							
33. Degree to which policy for class scheduling for vo-ag is adequate.							
34. Degree to which policy for vo-ag teacher load computation is justifiable.							
35. Degree to which policy for compensation of vo-ag teachers is adequate.							
36. Degree to which policy for operation of the FFA program is adequate.							
PART III: Leadership Abilities of Vocational Agriculture Personnel 37. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to accomplish worthwhile goals.							
38. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher has taken part in community affairs.							
39. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is concerned for each student's proficiency.							
40. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to deal with a problem and reach a logical conclusion.							
41. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher takes part in school activities.							
42. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to recognize outmoded concepts and educational practices.							

SECTION B (Continued)

	Outstanding 7	6	Sufficient 5	4	3	Insufficient 2	1
43. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher persists in bringing about needed changes and additions in the program.							
44. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to work with other professional personnel as a team.							
45. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher participates in civic, religious, and professional organizations.							
46. Degree of self-confidence of a vo-ag teacher.							
47. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to meet demands of current situations.							
48. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher exhibits knowledge of agricultural information.							
49. Degree of acceptance of a vo-ag teacher as part of the community.							
50. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is dependable in carrying out responsibilities.							
51. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is an effective representative of entire school.							
52. Degree to which secondary students respect the leadership ability of a vo-ag teacher.							

SECTION B (Continued)

	Outstanding		Sufficient			Insufficient	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
53. Degree to which adults in the community respect the leadership ability of a vo-ag teacher.							
54. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is adequately trained.							
55. Degree to which a vo-ag teacher is able to communicate with students, adults, and professional personnel.							